

## Dangers that social networking sites pose to Privacy of Data

A social network service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities.(from wikipedia).And nowadays these social networking sites are becoming more and more famous as number of users as well as numerous functionalities getting added up.

### What does a user do in a social networking sites??

- Mainly they share their basic information,hobbies,pictures,ideas,interests,join groups.
- And user add other user who are familiar to them i.e;friends,relatives and also the users who are in the same groups or involved in same activity or who share the same idea or interest.

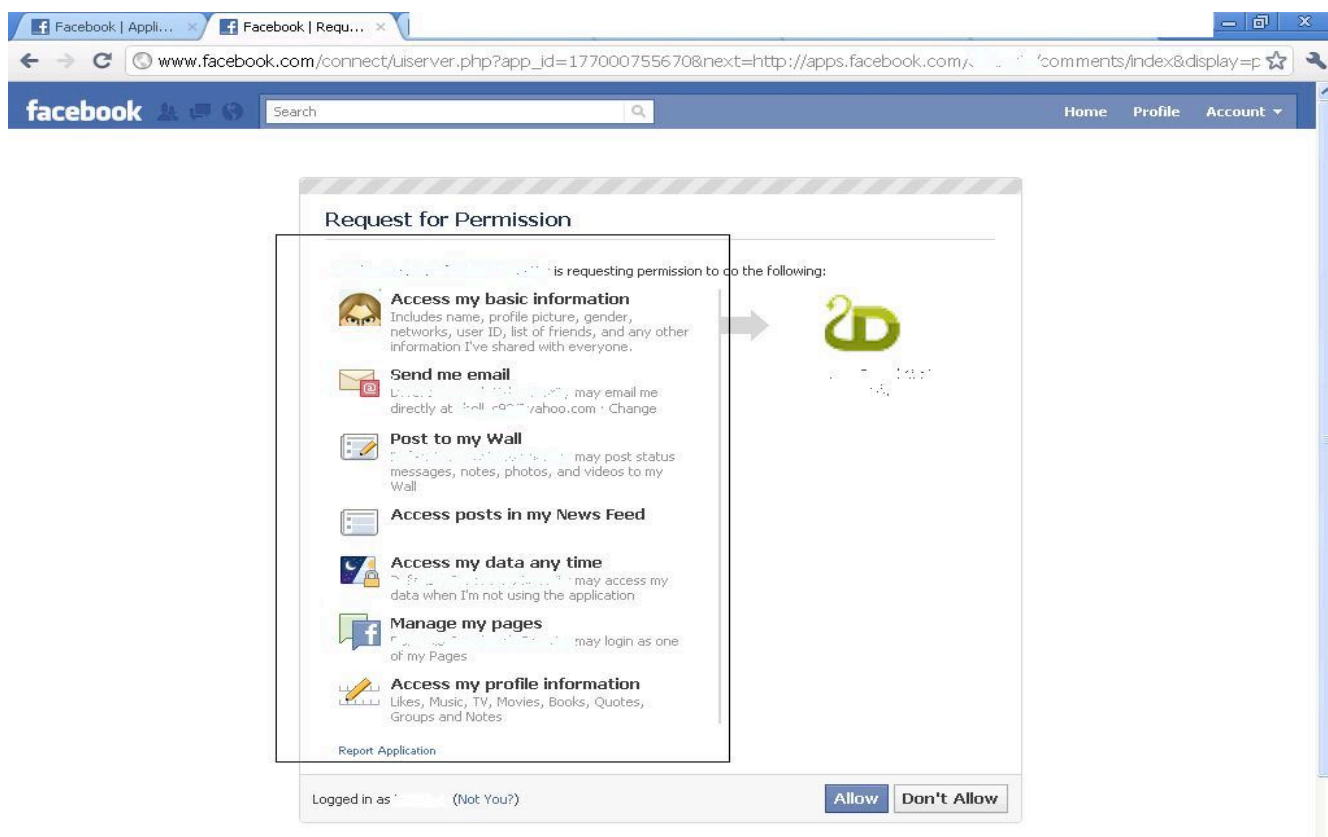
### Now how does these social network sites lead to data theft ??

The data theft happens when users becomes careless. For example by giving out all the information like email id,phone number,personal pictures,address which should be kept private in the first case and why it should be hidden or kept private?simple attackers can either misuse your personal pictures or some times they can also guess the answer of the user's email address secret questions which may lead to getting the email ids compromised.

Next major issue is the third party applications which comes along with the social networking sites. For example if a user adds any application to his facebook or any other social networking profile,then the particular application requests for certain permissions like

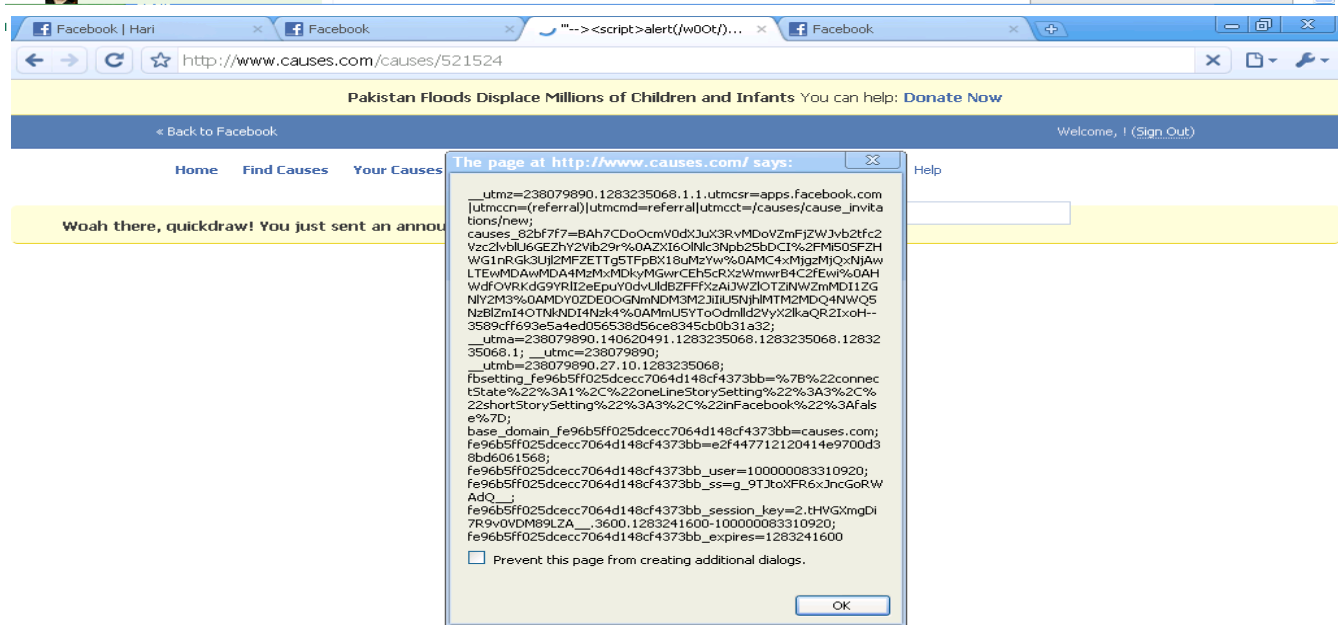
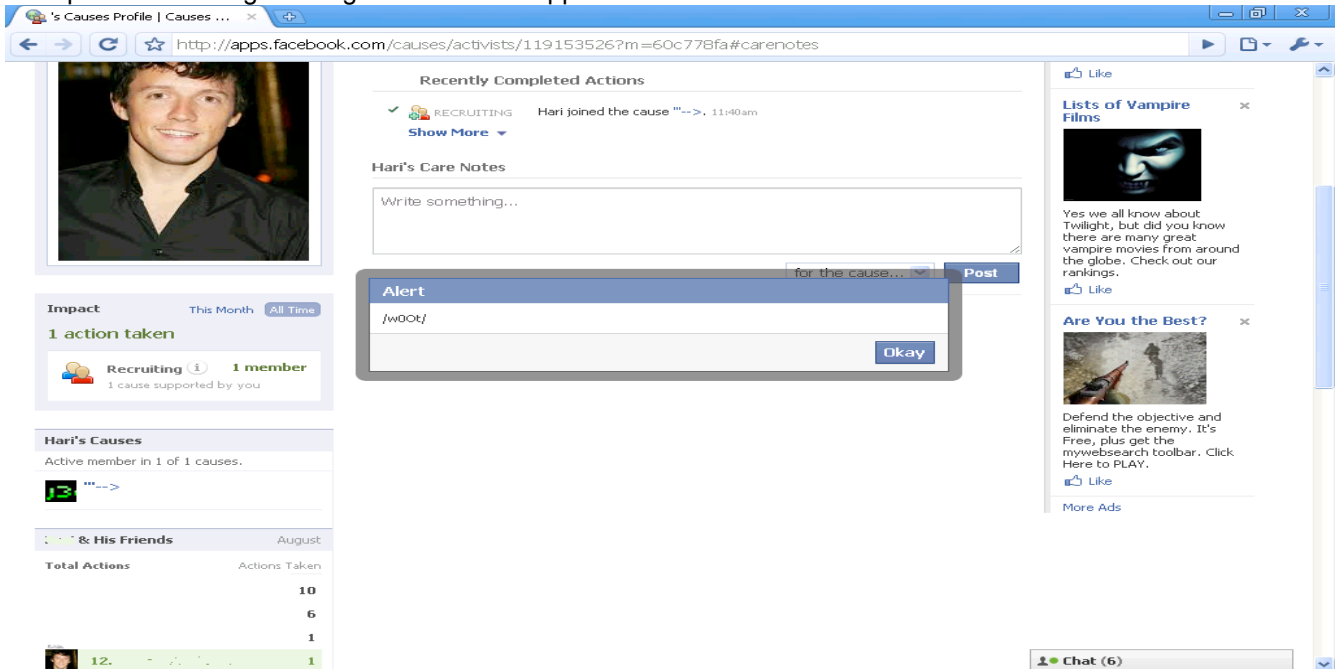
- Access basic information
- Send an email
- Post messages,notes,photos in your profile.
- Accessing data at any time (even if the user is not using that particular application).
- Access profile informations.
- And other edit permissions in the user's profile.

snapshot showing the request for permission:



- All applications in social networking sites are not vulnerable but most of them do have. For example one of the famous application is "causes" with 2,000,448 users in facebook alone has cross site scripting vulnerability. Now the attacker can create a cause with a malicious XSS script inserted to either gather information like cookies, infect other users or can redirect to the phishing page were some users may fall for it.

Snap shots showing xss bug in once of the application :



Waiting for s2.causes.com...

12:16 PM

Another thing is if any user has knowledge in coding can make his/her own malicious application and try to spread as much as possible to other users. The attacker can either performs a java-drive in or install a BHO based key logger to the victim's browser.

**Now how to protect your data or privacy:**

- First never make private information as public. If you want to display them,change the privacy settings in your profile and make them visible only if they are in your friends list.
- Secondly add only those whom you know. Don't make unknown people as friends.
- Don't add unknown applications to your profile(To be on a safer side).